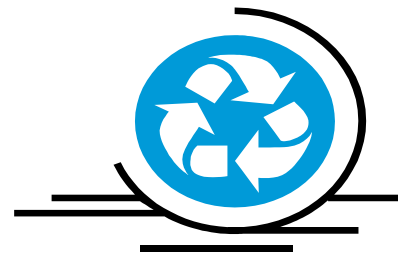


**Department
Of
Veterans Affairs**

***The Secretary's*
Robert W. Carey Performance
Excellence Awards**



***2006
Circle of Excellence Award
Application***

THE SECRETARY'S ROBERT W. CAREY PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE
AWARDS PROGRAM
2006 Circle of Excellence Information and Application

FOREWORD

The 2006 application package for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs' Robert W. Carey Performance Excellence Awards includes application form, timeline, instructions, evaluation process, recognition, and winners' responsibilities. This is the Secretary's highest award for performance excellence.



The Management Systems Improvement Service must receive applications for the Secretary's Robert W. Carey Performance Excellence – Circle of Excellence Awards no later than May 11, 2006. The Awards will be presented in the fall of 2006.

For information concerning the 2006 application guidelines, contact the Management Systems Improvement Service (008B3).

Management Systems Improvement Service (MSIS) (008B3)
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Planning, and Preparedness
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420
(202) 273-5077

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I. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The Circle of Excellence (COE) award promotes and recognizes continued use of Baldrige criteria by recent VA Trophy award winning organizations. The award recognizes continued levels of excellence with public recognition and a large plaque indicating performance excellence. The examination process provides high performing applicants with a high quality, detailed analysis of performance. Feedback provides applicants with strengths and opportunities to refine systems and continue on the journey to excellence.

The process timeline for COE applicants differs from other Carey applicants. This is due to differences in examination processes. To ensure applicants understand due dates and examination activities a separate COE application is used.

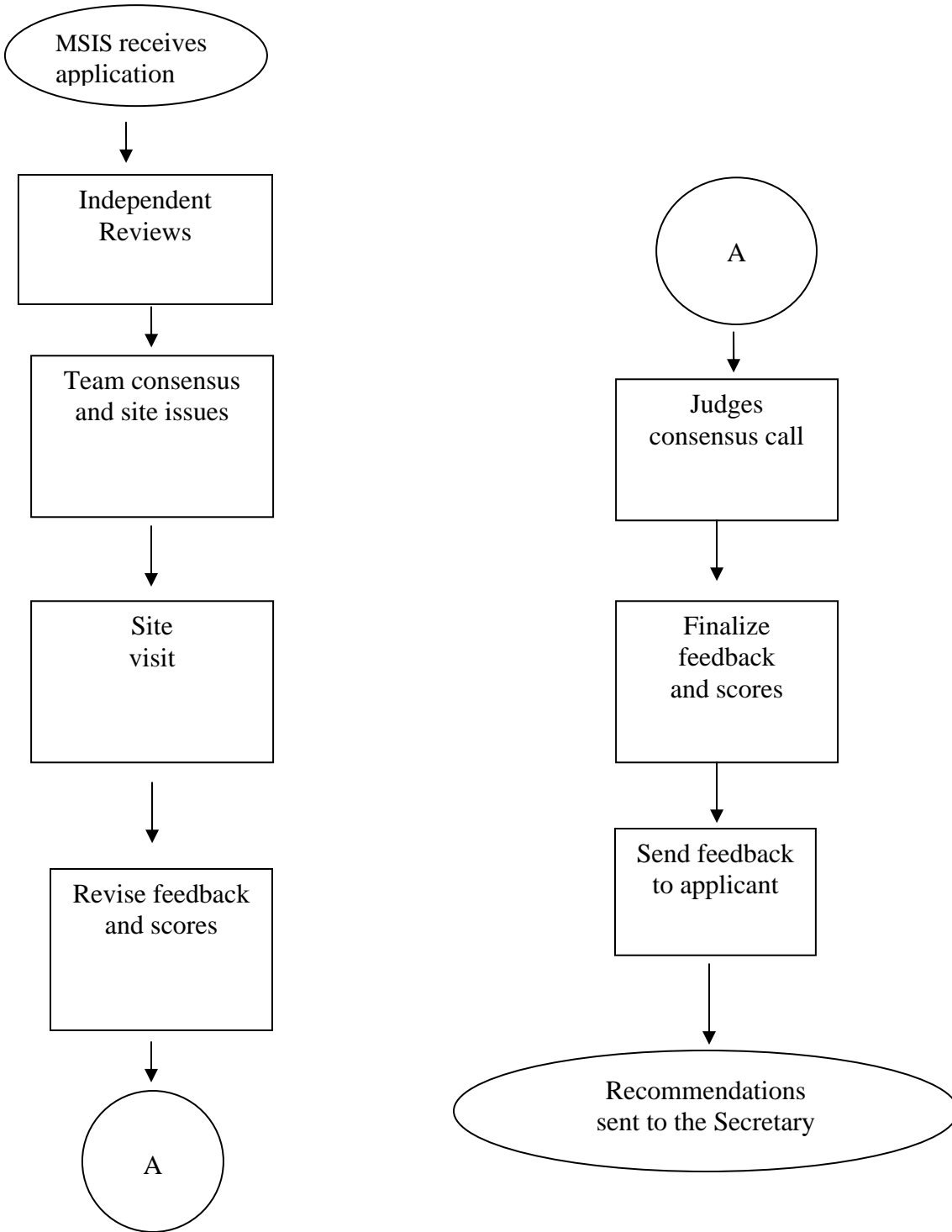
Background

In 1992, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) established the annual **Secretary's Robert W. Carey Performance Excellence Awards** to recognize organizations that have implemented exemplary approaches to systems management. Based on the **Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award** criteria, this award provides a model for VA organizations to measure their performance against other public and private sector organizations. In addition to supporting VA Strategic Goals, the program also inspires organizations and individuals to seek opportunities for continuous improvement.

The award named in memory of Robert W. Carey, a publicly recognized VA quality leader and a champion for excellence in the Federal Government. Mr. Carey was the Director of the Philadelphia Regional Office and Insurance Center from 1985 until 1990.

II. CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE PROCESS

Process Flow Chart



Process Description

Examiner teams will consist of three or more people, identified as being among the most experienced and knowledgeable criteria users available to VA as examiners. The examination process consists of:

- Each examiner will produce a complete independent evaluation of the application. Due to examiner knowledge and experience with the criteria this examination will take place at the examiner's post-of-duty.
- Independent reviews will be shared with all team members.
- Examiners will lead consensus call discussions of one or more criteria categories as the team discusses and agrees on strengths, opportunities, site issues, and initial scores.
- A site visit to clarify/verify information provided in the written application.
- The examination team's feedback report, scores, and site visit information are then given to two Carey Judges for consensus review and validation.
- A finalized consensus report and score band information are sent to the applicant.
- Recognition recommendations are prepared and forwarded to the Secretary for consideration along with other Carey award recommendations.
- Winning organizations are recognized with a large plaque during the Annual Robert W. Carey Performance Excellence Awards Ceremony.

III. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Eligibility

Organizations that have won the Secretary's Performance Excellence Trophy within the previous five years are eligible to compete for the "Circle of Excellence" category of recognition. This includes trophy winners from 2001 to 2005.

Circle of Excellence (COE) Award: organizations that demonstrate effective, systematic approaches to management, initiate refinements to continuously improve processes, and show positive trends and results in most areas of importance.

Timeline

DATE:	ACTIVITY:
February 23	Applicant contacts Administration/MSIS with intent to apply
April 28	Applications due to Administrations
May 11	Applications due to MSIS
June 12	Examiners complete Independent Reviews of applicant application and submit scorebooks electronically to MSIS
June 16	MSIS collects and re-distributes Examiner Team member score books to entire team.
June 22	Consensus conference calls begin
July 18	Consensus calls complete
July 25	Consensus report and scores complete
August	Site Visits
August 31	Examiner Team submits electronically the final consolidated Feedback Package to MSIS.
September	Judge's consensus call
October	Secretary selects winners

Application General Guidelines

Applicants must complete: nomination form, located on page 13; Organizational Profile; and responses to selected Baldrige Performance Excellence criteria. The application should be written in non-technical language and should address the specific sub-elements described in the award criteria.

The applications must be written so examiners and judges, who may not be familiar with the applicant's industry, can assess performance relative to the evaluation criteria. Narratives for each area addressed should be fully responsive and assume no prior knowledge of the organization. Responses should be concise and quantitative where possible. Facts and information should support statements. Assertions unsupported by plausible data, information, or facts will receive no credit during application evaluation. Care should be taken to fully define terminology specific to the business of the organization. If acronyms are used, define them and provide a glossary (glossary pages are NOT counted in the specified page limits).

- Each applicant organization should forward its application through its chain of command.

Application Requirements

To apply for the Circle of Excellence Award, applicants will follow the same Application Guidelines as other Robert W. Carey Performance Excellence Award applicants.

- All applications must include a "Circle of Excellence Nomination Form", an Organizational Profile, and responses demonstrating the achievement outlined in each of the seven criteria.
- Organizational Profile limited to five (5) pages (these pages are NOT counted in the overall page limit).
- The application is limited to fifty (50) pages to include all illustrative attachments (charts, graphs, vision statement, etc.) Pages in excess of the 50-page limit will not be examined. The glossary is not included in the 50-page limit.
- Applications must be printed or typed in fixed pitch 12 font or fewer per inch OR proportional spacing font point size 10 or larger. *A typical document produced in Times New Roman 10 point font will satisfy this requirement..*
- Charts, graphs, and tables must be no less than 8-point font. Particular care should be taken to ensure that all graphs, charts, and tables are large enough to read.
- Each sub-element (i.e. 1.1a, 1.2b) of the criteria should be separately labeled and addressed in the application.
- The use of columns for text is encouraged in order to conserve space.

Each applicant organization should forward its application through its Administration chain of command. Prior to submission, each nominating organization is to use its own internal screening process to select its nomination(s) that should be sent to the

Management Systems Improvement Service (008B3). **Administrations are responsible for ensuring that nominations forwarded for evaluation do not have organizational or leadership issues that would disqualify an applicant from award recognition.**

Examination Criteria

The Secretary's award program uses the current Malcolm Baldrige Performance Excellence Criteria to evaluate applications. Applicants may use:

- **2006 Baldrige Business Performance Excellence Criteria; or**
- **2006 Baldrige Health Care Performance Excellence Criteria.**

Examiners and Judges

Examiners and Judges are customers in the application review process. The above specifications represent feedback gathered directly from them. Applicants, the suppliers in the application review process, should strive to satisfy the customers' expectations of an application package that is easy to evaluate. Doing so will optimize the evaluation and selection processes as well as enable the Examiners to produce a thorough feedback package that accurately reflects the applicant's status in relation to the criteria.

IV. SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications Submission

Applications for the **2006 Secretary's Robert W. Carey Performance Excellence Awards, Circle of Excellence category**, are due to the Management Systems Improvement Service by **May 11, 2006**. Any applications received after that date may NOT be considered. In order to permit time for internal organizational reviews, facilities must submit their applications to the following appropriate address no later than:

April 28, 2006 - Veterans Health Administration:

Office of Performance and Quality (10Q)
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420
Attention: Michael Greenblatt
Telephone: (202) 273-8331

April 28, 2006 - Veterans Benefits Administration:

Office of Field Operations
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420
Telephone: (202) 273-7259

April 28, 2006 - National Cemetery Administration

Business Process Improvement Service (41B3)
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420
Telephone: (202) 273-5164

Organizations should designate a coordinator who will be responsible for submitting applications. An original and **fourteen** (14) copies of the complete application package, including nomination form, should be prepared for submission. A disk copy (Microsoft Word 7.0) of the application is required in addition to the hard-copy submission.

Administration award coordinators need to forward applications to MSIS by May 11, 2006. The address for MSIS is:

Management Systems Improvement Service (008B3)
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Planning, and Preparedness
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20420

Points of Contact within MSIS (008B3) are

Eric Malloy
Carey Award Program Manager
Eric.Malloy@va.gov
202-273-5585

Pamela Ribovick
Pamela.Ribovick@va.gov
202-273-5285

Gwen Young
Gwendolyn.Young@va.gov
202-273-5038

V. RECOGNITION AND WINNERS RESPONSIBILITIES

Recognition

Circle of Excellence winners will receive an elegant encased award that identifies each year of recognition until that organization is eligible to compete for the trophy again. At the annual awards ceremony, held in the fall, the Secretary will present this award with other winners of the **Secretary's Robert W. Carey Performance Excellence Awards**. VA will showcase the award winners throughout the year.

- Work Products

The **Secretary's Robert W. Carey Performance Excellence Awards** were created to recognize high performance and to promote systems management awareness throughout VA. Accordingly, each award winner will be asked to (1) prepare a list of achievements so that quality initiatives and innovations can be shared with other facilities; (2) participate in National and Regional Conferences on performance excellence; (3) respond to inquiries from other facilities seeking to improve through the use of performance excellence criteria, and (4) host on-site visits for interested groups.

- Costs

Any costs incurred by the Board of Examiners, other than travel costs, will be the responsibility of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Central Office. The Administration, Staff Office, or other organization submitting the application will cover costs related to preparation of the application. Award winners will bear the costs of travel to the Award Ceremony as well as conferences.

VI. CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE- Nomination Form

Applicant Organization

Name

Address

Highest Ranking Official in Applicant Organization

Signature

Name

Title

Address

Telephone

FAX

Email

Size of Organization

Number of Employees

Number of Sites

Official Point of Contact in Applicant Organization

Name

Title

Address

Telephone

Fax

Email

Version 1.0